

# Whitehills Pre School Class Day Care of Children

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**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
27 March 2024

**Service provided by:**  
Angus Council

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003000043

**Service no:**  
CS2007151113

## About the service

Whitehills Pre School Class is a registered daycare of children service provided by Angus Council and delivered from Whitehills Primary School. The Pre School class has exclusive use of an open plan play space, cloakroom area, children's toilet facilities, snack and meal spaces and an enclosed rear garden.

The service is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 40 children at any one time. The age range of the children will be from three years to those not yet attending primary school.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Monday 25 and Wednesday 27 March 2024. Two inspectors carried out the inspection from the Care Inspectorate.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, registration and complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

To inform our evaluation we:

- spoke with children using the service;
- received feedback from 13 families;
- received feedback from 10 staff;
- spoke with staff and management;
- observed practice and children's experiences; and
- reviewed documents.

## Key messages

- Children could lead their play and participate in a range of stimulating activities.
- The facilities and resources were of high quality.
- The service was committed to continuous improvement through self-evaluation and quality assurance.
- The whole team demonstrated a sound knowledge and understanding of meeting the needs of children.
- The team valued parents and carers as partners. They sought regular feedback to assess the quality of service they provided.

## From this inspection we evaluated this service as:

In evaluating quality, we use a six point scale where 1 is unsatisfactory and 6 is excellent

How good is our care, play and learning?	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

## How good is our care, play and learning?

5 - Very Good

### Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

We evaluated this key question as very good, where major strengths impacted on positive outcomes for children.

Children experienced kind, caring and warm interactions. For example, staff responded genuinely and positively when children reached out for support. This contributed to children feeling safe and secure, and as a result all children were displaying as confident, happy and engaged throughout their play experiences.

Staff were very good at following cues from children and their engagement with children was child centred. For example, staff were dancing, singing and playing music that children requested. They also participated in children's role play, physical play, cosied children in when reading stories and followed their interests. This supported children to form positive attachments with staff, as children were respected, included and confident.

Families commented positively about the care their children received. They told us:

"The staff have all shown to be engaging, understanding of each individual child's needs and personality. I've been very happy with the care provided".

"Fabulous care from my child's key worker xxx. She really is a huge asset to the nursery".

A staff member shared "Children have a positive relationship with all staff, not just key workers".

When required, the service worked with other professionals to support children's health and wellbeing needs. Staff knew children well and confidently discussed individual personalities and needs. My worlds and online journals captured key information. We discussed the benefits of strengthening the information logged. For example, to include clearer strategies of support and clearer reviews. We signposted the service to 'Guide for providers on personal planning. Early Learning and Childcare' for support with reviewing procedures. Prior to the conclusion of the inspection the service had started to take steps to enhance this area.

Children's mealtime experiences were relaxed and unhurried. Presence of staff helped ensure children were kept safe around any allergy requirements, as well as promoting the development of communication and language skills. Staff recognised children's achievements, provided praise and encouragement during these times.

The management of medication was supported through safe storage of medication and staff being knowledgeable about children's health needs and allergies; this ensured the wellbeing of children. Staff fully understood the role they played in keeping children safe and protected from harm and had undertaken child protection training.

### Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children benefited from a variety of play-based learning opportunities. For example, the environment had print and written word that inspired children to mark make. Natural resources such as paints, flowers, plants and sticks were readily available to engage children in their play and learning. The creative approaches and use of materials such as mirrors, tuff trays and areas across the setting supported children to develop their line of thinking, creativity and promoted problem solving skills. One staff member told us "All play, learning and development opportunities are based around the children's interests and needs".

Loose parts which included cable reels, tyres, crates and large pieces of wood supported children's sense of adventure and enjoyment.

Children were being effectively supported to develop their language skills as staff used age-appropriate words and conversations to engage children in meaningful interactions. For example, staff used language such as "I wonder if you can", "how can we find out" and "where can you find..." this supported children's understanding and speech and language. Staff told us "children are given open ended questions to help support them in making choices in their own learning and creating a secure foundation of knowledge and understanding".

Planning supported a balance of spontaneous and planned learning. Children's ongoing learning and developmental progression was supported through the recording and sharing of observations. Learning journals were individualised and included significant learning. These were shared with parents through online journals and included children's achievements and identified next steps. As a result, children were effectively supported to learn and progress.

Meaningful links were being developed within the local community to support and enhance children's experiences. These included daily walks and links with local businesses to support the garden developments and contribute to children's health and wellbeing. We encouraged the service to continue with plans to develop opportunities for children. For example, to include intergenerational learning opportunities and build on experiences outside the nursey environment.

### How good is our setting?

**5 - Very Good**

### Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

We evaluated this key question as very good, where major strengths impacted on positive outcomes for children.

Children experienced a safe, comfortable and welcoming environment where they could play and learn. Resources were of good quality and were age and stage appropriate. Children were confident moving around the spaces available, both indoors and within the enclosed outdoor space. Parents told us that "the outdoor space is just as well developed as the indoor space" and "best setting my children have attended. I've seen and visited many nurseries, and this is by far the best we have ever come across".

Homely touches which included fairy lights, lamps, cushions and real-life objects, all ensured the setting was comfortable and full of resources to support curiosity. The setting ensured children were made to feel valued. One parent told us "There is plenty variation of stations and activities. It is also extremely clean".

Children had ownership of the environment through artwork and photos being displayed, which provided children with opportunities to revisit activities, experiences and learning. Displays, photographs and artwork contributed to the children's feeling of belonging in the setting.

Safety was carefully considered across the setting. For example, risk assessments, secure entrance systems, high door handles/gates being locked, and the effective monitoring by staff ensured children were observed and supervised throughout the day.

Effective infection prevention and control measures such as handwashing, use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) during key tasks, cleaning of surfaces and resetting areas supported children's health and wellbeing.

A system for reporting accidents and incidents was in place and these were audited to help ensure a safe environment for children. We discussed opportunities where the auditing could be strengthened. For example, through expanding on the recorded information and include a clear log of action and learning taken.

Children's information was stored safely. Staff were aware of their responsibilities in keeping information confidential.

## How good is our leadership?

4 – Good

### Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Aims and objectives were in place and these had been reviewed in consultation with staff and families. This helped everyone to feel part of the service, ensuring views and opinions were valued. Parents told us "XXX is often in the nursery which is lovely and makes me feel comfortable about approaching senior management if I needed to" and "Very visible and kind manager. Always nearby and I feel if I ever had an issue (which I never have) she is easily accessible to discuss things".

The management team and staff valued the strong relationships they had built with families. Children and families were regularly consulted and views were gathered through the use of QR codes, questionnaires and a suggestion box. Parents told us "I've been very happy with the care provided by Whitehills. They involve the parents a lot" and "regular opportunities to come into the setting are appreciated, parents' meetings as well as an information meeting I was able to attend was fantastic and a great way to learn about the setting".

Staff told us they felt very well supported. Staff were skilled, motivated, and worked well together. Leadership opportunities were available which included, outdoors, numeracy and literacy and health and wellbeing leaders. Continuous reflection on practice and opportunities for professional discussion brought about positive changes for children and families.

The setting's improvement plan was reflective of the current needs of the service as identified by staff, management and children. Targets were manageable, achievable and the plan was used as a working document. We asked management to consider developing how they consistently measure the impact and record actions they have taken throughout their improvement journey. This would ensure children benefited from a service that continues to improve.

Quality assurance systems helped maintain and supported the delivery of high-quality care for children. A quality assurance calendar was in place outlining key tasks. Audits and duties included the monitoring of staff practice, environment and accidents. We discussed with management where audits could be strengthened. For example, through developing a tool to purposefully audit medication, accident / incident and personal plans. Prior to the conclusion of the inspection the service had taken steps to progress this area and started resolving matters that had not been identified prior to inspection.

Team meetings took place which provided opportunities for sharing, planning and completing important information. This resulted in a happy, secure, and supportive environment for children and their families.

## How good is our staff team?

**5 - Very Good**

### Quality indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Parents told us how friendly and caring staff are. One parent shared "overall, myself and family are very happy with the nursery, mainly due to the fantastic staff team who are clearly passionate about their jobs".

Staff were very welcoming and engaged during the inspection process. Effective staff deployment across the service meant that the right number of staff were meeting children's individual needs consistently throughout the day. For example, staff breaks minimised impact on children whilst allowing staff to rest and be refreshed.

Regular meetings and support from management ensured staff felt professionally and personally supported. For example, the team benefited from termly wellbeing check-in meetings. This supported a strong team working ethos and contributed to a positive and caring environment for children and families. Staff told us "The team is unique in a way they all support each other in providing the best possible care" and "I find my colleagues to be supportive. We all have different skills, experience and attributes which we bring to the setting. We work well as a team, sharing the same values and goals. The children are at the heart of everything we do".

A good mixture of skills, knowledge and experience in the staff team contributed to positive interactions, play and learning experiences for children. Staff supported each other throughout the day, they had positive working relationships and were supportive and respectful of each other. All staff strongly agreed that 'staff work well as a team and support each other'.

Training logs supported staff reflections on learning and identified next steps in their professional development. We discussed with the management team that training evaluations could be further developed to encourage all staff to reflect consistently and in more detail. This will support staff to further consider the impact training has had on practice and promote positive outcomes for children and families.

## Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com).



## Detailed evaluations

How good is our care, play and learning?	5 - Very Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good
1.3 Play and learning	5 - Very Good

How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	5 - Very Good

How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	4 - Good

How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good

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